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A NEW PROGRAM

IN

TEACHER EDUCATION

A Proposal

presented to

THE FORD FOUNDATION

by

Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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A NEW PROGRAM IN TEACHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

This is a description of a new program of teacher education at Central Michigan University.[1] We believe it will provide teachers who are better selected, better educated, and better prepared to meet the changing realities of the classrooms of today and tomorrow.

They will be better selected because the program begins with recruitment and counseling in the high schools; better educated because the program will provide a more flexible, individualized course of study with a good balance of general, specialized and professional education; better prepared to adjust to the changing classroom because the program will provide more on-the-job experience, more contact with experimental programs and a close follow-up in the first year of teaching.

Teacher education should be a joint responsibility of the university and public schools. Central Michigan University, which serves thirty-eight out of eighty-three counties in the state, is especially well qualified to develop this partnership. Since its origin in 1892, the school's primary purpose has been the education of teachers. For many years our Education Department has worked closely with public schools in various aspects of teacher education. The Field Services Division has provided many services to thousands of teachers and schools.

Previous experiments, such as the Teacher Aide Project, have established valuable relationships between the university and schools that are seeking new ways to solve educational problems. Contacts already established with these schools will provide students in the new program with unusual experiences as they work in schools with new and experimental programs.

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1 Now known as Central Michigan College, the school will officially become a university on June 1, 1959.

A tradition of experimentation and initiation of new approaches to teaching is so well established that the State Board of Education, our controlling body, has designated Central as an experimental university. This provides freedom to carry out well-conceived programs without strict adherence to the rules and regulations of the State Board.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS

The New Program in Teacher Education is based on the following three assumptions:

1. That better programs in teacher preparation require greater attention to individual differences among teachers.

2. That public, tax-supported elementary and secondary education must assume a responsible partnership role with teacher education institutions in the recruitment and preparation of teachers.

3. That the experiential aspects of professional preparation of teachers can be best provided in the classrooms of the schools themselves in cooperation with the teacher education institution.

The New Program in Teacher Education also reflects certain beliefs held in common by the Central Michigan University faculty and the participating schools. These beliefs are as follows:

1. That the role of the teacher in our society is of increased importance and makes increased demands on the teacher.

2. That the effective teacher requires both a sound liberal education and high professional competence.

3. That professional competence requires a thorough understanding of the role of the schools in our society, of how individuals grow and learn, of basic principles and methods of teaching, and an adequate opportunity to buttress these understandings in practical situations under competent guidance.

PURPOSES

The basic purpose of the new program is to achieve a teacher education program distinguished by the excellence of teachers prepared through it.

Supporting purposes are these:

1. To engage a significantly higher proportion of capable high school graduates in preparing for careers in teaching.

2. To provide programs adapted to the individual competencies of students.

3. To place the teacher education program on a broader base with the direct and substantive participation of superior school systems on a partnership basis with the university in the preparation of teachers.

4. To develop and employ highly reliable and functional means of appraising competencies of teachers.

5. To make more effective use in teacher education of relevant concepts, techniques, and materials from industry, business, and the professions.

6. To establish an all-university approach to teacher education affording the most productive use of university resources and disciplines associated with the preparation of teachers.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAM

The new program provides for two plans. The four-year plan will lead to a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate. The five-year plan will lead to a bachelor's degree, a teaching certificate and, if the quality and nature of the work merit it, a master's degree. Both plans will encompass the entire undergraduate preparation of the teacher; not just a segment of it. Both are designed to accommodate increasingly large numbers of elementary and secondary teacher candidates.

Key features of the two plans will include individually planned courses of study, improved and better-balanced curriculum, and more on-the-job experience. Both will begin in the high schools. High school and university personnel will join forces in identifying able students and encouraging them to select teaching as a career.

An improved program of guidance is emphasized in both plans, first in the high school, then in the university and, finally, in the follow-up of

the beginning teachers. Program counselors will help students plan programs suited to their strengths, weaknesses and needs. Course requirements will be altered to reach the goal, that of liberally educated persons who have used their college years to the maximum advantage to prepare for teaching careers.

Although each plan is designed for both elementary and secondary teacher candidates, both are necessary if the varying needs of students are to be met. Students will select, in consultation with their program counselors, the plan they desire to follow. Some students will prefer the shorter period of time in college provided by the four-year plan. It includes liberal and professional education in each of the college years. Other students will be interested in the "earning while learning" aspects of the five-year plan. It will provide for more actual experiences in the classroom, with pay, and the opportunity for earning graduate credit; perhaps even a Master's Degree. Furthermore, the two plans will provide opportunity to compare and explore different approaches to teacher education.

The following serious gaps in the teacher education program will be bridged by these plans:

1. The gap between high school and the university.
2. The gap between the university and a teaching position.
3. The gap between the university and the public school.
4. The gap that too often exists between liberal arts faculties and education departments -- a gap that makes many a university a house divided.

The first gap will be bridged by a selection, recruitment and counseling program in the high schools. The second will be bridged by extensive follow-up and in-service education for beginning teachers. The third gap will be bridged by a partnership with public schools and the fourth by mak-

ing this program an all-university effort, for on this campus teacher education is the concern of all.

The entire faculty of Central Michigan University --- those in the liberal arts as well as professional education --- is actively involved in a re-examination of the curriculum and educational philosophy of the university. Liberal education receives the same emphasis for teacher-education candidates as for other students. Improved guidance and individual study programs will enable students to acquire a better, broader education than the usual prescribed program al ows.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Under the four-year plan general education will constitute about thirty-five per cent of a student's work. Study in the major fields of specialization will account for forty per cent. Fifteen per cent will be devoted to course work in psychology and education and ten per cent to pre-teaching and teaching experiences.

During the first year in the university the students will spend most of their time in organized courses in general education. They will also take an introductory course in professional education. As a part of this course they will participate in programs in the community and schools involving children or youth. The second year will be devoted primarily to general and specialized education but students will be assigned to participate in the laboratory school in relation to their course in child or adolescent development. In the third year general and special education continue to constitute a large proportion of the students program. In one semester of this year the students will be assigned to directed teaching in Mount Pleasant and other centers within commuting distance. In the fourth year students will complete their general and special education programs in one semester.

In the other semester they will become extern teachers and complete their theory courses in professional education.

An important feature of the four-year plan will be the follow-up of graduates during the first year of teaching. School and university personnel will work together in planning the transition from the role of student to that of teacher. First year teachers will receive expert assistance in preparing instructional materials, planning units of study and working out professional problems.

Beginning teachers will participate in special conferences with school and university staff members, take appropriate college courses and attend meetings that will contribute to professional growth. At the end of the year they may be given credit toward a Master's Degree. The amount of credit will depend on the nature and quality of the work completed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Under the five-year plan students will have considerably more teaching experience than the typical teacher education program or the new four-year plan provides. The first two years will be spent on campus in a program especially suited to the needs of each student. The remaining three years will consist of alternating semesters of on-campus and off-campus on-the-job experience. At the same time that a student is working off-campus, he will be taking a closely related professional course or one in a subject field in which he is teaching. These courses will be taught by regular faculty members in regional centers or on-campus in late afternoon, evening or Saturday classes. If facilities are available, these courses may be taught via TV accompanied by scheduled discussion group sessions.

In each of the three off-campus semesters the student will both learn and earn as a full-time paid employee of a selected public school. Each of

the succeeding on-the-job semesters will provide a more challenging assignment. His first experience will be that of a teacher assistant. The second will be that of a teacher extern. The last will be as a teacher associate under close supervision. This part of the program again emphasizes the vital importance of school-university partnership.

General education will make up thirty per cent of the five-year program. Specialized education in the major fields will require thirty-five per cent of the time. Fifteen per cent will be devoted to organized course work in psychology and education and twenty per cent will be devoted to on-the-job experiences.

EVALUATION

Included in the evaluation of this program will be the measurement of teacher competencies as well as the relative merits of the four- and five-year plans. Evaluation procedures will be rigorous but flexible enough to permit program changes.

TIME SCHEDULE AND PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Planning is already well advanced and the program will be in operation in September, 1959. A minimum of five years will be needed to develop it fully, but it will be self-continuing after that.

Approximately 240 students will be involved in the program in the first year. It is anticipated that in the seventh year some 2500 students --- roughly half of all those in teacher education at Central Michigan --- will be enrolled in the new program.

By the end of the current semester the professional education courses and the techniques for individualizing student programs will be readied for initiation in the fall. Committees will be working on strengthening general education and preparation in the major disciplines.

Creation of partnerships between Central Michigan University and selected school systems will be under way by June. Public schools will assist in planning appropriate programs and contracts will be prepared and signed.

During the summer two workshops will be conducted, one for students and program counselors and the other for school and college personnel who will be involved in the program.

A committee on evaluation will have begun its work by June.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

The new program includes four- and five-year plans for the complete preparation of both elementary and secondary teachers.

It establishes a school-university partnership on a large scale. Recruiting, selecting, educating and following the progress of teachers is accepted as a joint responsibility of the university and public schools.

The new program provides for the preparation of large numbers of teachers (2500). Because of this and because Central Michigan University is a tax-supported public institution, the program will be in the mainstream of teacher-education as well as public elementary and secondary education. Findings will have broad application throughout the nation.

Other features of the program are these:

1. Provision for the identification and measurement of teacher competencies.

2. Flexibility in order to conserve the capacities and develop the potential of each teacher candidate.

3. Special activities, designed to develop dynamic, competent and creative teachers.

4. Recording of progressive growth of teacher candidates, over a six year period, to furnish valuable data for improving future educational programs.

5. Continuous all-faculty study of the curriculum and adjustment of imbalances.

6. Extensive experiences for teacher candidates in public schools.

7. Testing and adaptation of concepts of team teaching in the campus school, college classes and public schools.

8. Services to the cooperating schools, enabling them to improve and modernize their operations.

9. Improvement of university and school faculties through summer workshops, study groups and working committees.